

Dance: Karole Armitage

By JACK ANDERSON

There was one serene moment in "Do We Could," the new dance that Karole Armitage offered Thursday night at the Kitchen. It came at the very beginning. The houselights went out, leaving the room bathed in the soft dim light that filtered in from the street through the auditorium's windows. Somehow, it was soothing just to sit while nothing happened. Eventually, however, the stage lights came up and the dancers entered. From then on, "Do We Could" was compulsively busy.

Looking like mechanical toys, Deborah Riley, Michael Bloom and Miss Armitage scurried about with jerky steps and tight gestures. Occasionally, they encountered invisible obstacles that caused them to gasp or stumble. Later, they dealt with real obstacles — props designed by Charles Atlas. They moved a board, fussed with the lighting equipment and opened a wooden gate. But they always returned to their scurrying.

This frenetic activity alternated with episodes in slow motion. But slowness brought no relief from tension, for when the dancers moved slowly they moved with grim determination. As the

work progressed, they became rooted to one spot, where they made cautious gestures from side to side or marched briskly in place, going nowhere.

No one ever managed to get anywhere. Yet everyone seemed eager to get ahead. Therefore "Do We Could," although it lacked an explicit theme, managed to evoke the rat race of the business world.

Although the satire was gentle rather than biting, Miss Armitage's choreography was inventive and her dancers apparently enjoyed looking harried. Thus Mr. Bloom peered out at the world so anxiously from behind a pair of spectacles that one could easily imagine him to be a young businessman desperately eager for promotion, but doomed to ulcers and nervous jitters.

"Do We Could" concluded when Pete Rose brought in a change of clothes for the performers. The dancers then relaxed, cleaned up, swept the floor and strolled casually off, their work over, their rat race ended.

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